MODERN RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS

THE EARLY RELIGION OF ISRAEL

JAMES BAYLES BATON

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I

THE PRIMITIVE SEMITIC PERIOD

In the Book of Genesis the Hebrews first appear as a nomadic race entering Canaan from the east. From the period prior to this migration no records or traditions have come down to us; nevertheless, by means of the sciences of comparative philology and comparative religion it is possible to gain considerable information concerning the theology of that remote age. In language, customs, and beliefs the Hebrews were closely akin to the Canaanites, Aramæans, Assyrians, Babylonians, Arabs, Ethiopians, and other races that are grouped

by ethnologists under the general name of "Semitic."[1] Ideas and institutions that are found among all these races must have been possessed by their forefathers in the primitive home in the Arabian desert, where they dwelt together before their dispersion. Applying this comparative method of research, let us now attempt to sketch in outline the main features of early Semitic religion.

The starting-point of Semitic religion, as of other primitive religions, was the recognition of the distinction of soul and body in man. Until the idea of spirit had been gained, belief in gods was an impossibility. This idea, as archæology shows, was acquired by mankind as early as the palæolithic age. It was a logical inference from the phenomena of consciousness and unconsciousness. In swoons and in death an

[1] From Sem, the Greek and Latin form of Shem, the assumed ancestor of these peoples in Gen. x. 21–31.

invisible something went out of a person; and since breathing also ceased, it was natural to identify the vital principle with the breath. In sleep the soul apparently left the body, and in dreams it visited distant scenes, yet it returned unharmed to its abode; hence it was inferred that it could exist in a disembodied state, and that it survived the catastrophe of death. Ghosts were mysterious and awe-inspiring, and their powers were believed to be vastly superior to those of living men, therefore they were both feared and honored as superhuman beings. In all the Semitic languages they were called by the general name *il* (Hebrew *ēl*, "god," cf. I Sam. xxviii. 13), which probably originally meant "power"; and they received the same rites of worship that were paid to other divinities.

This recognition of a distinction between soul and body in man furnished a basis for

the interpretation of nature as a whole. Every striking physical object, everything that could do something, or was believed to be able to do something, was supposed to be animated by a spirit that could leave it temporarily or permanently, just as the soul left the body. Such a spirit was known as *il*, "power," the same name that was applied to the disembodied human soul. Thus, besides ancestors, the Semites came to worship a multitude of other spiritual beings that manifested themselves in all sorts of phenomena.

Powers inhabiting physical objects were known as *ba'al* (fem. *ba'alat*), i.e. "owner, possessor," which described them as proprietors of the particular things in which they dwelt. There were ba'als of celestial phenomena, such as Ba'al-Shāmēm, "owner of the sky"; Ba'al-Ṣāphôn (Zephon), "owner of the north"; Shemesh, "the sun"; Sin, "the moon"; Ur, "light"; Ṣelem,

"darkness." There were ba'als of atmospheric phenomena, such as Regem, "storm"; Hadad (Addu, Adad), or Rammân (Rimmôn), "thunder"; Resheph, or Bārāḳ, "lightning"; Sharabu, "heat"; Birdu, "cold"; Bārād, "hail"; Māṭār, "rain"; Geshem, "shower"; Ṭal, "dew"; Ḥôreph, "frost."

There were ba'als of animals, such as Bêl-shaḫî, "owner of the wild boar"; Asad, "lion"; Nasr, "vulture"; 'Auf, "bird of prey." There were ba'als of trees, such as Ba'al-tāmār, "owner of the palm"; ba'als of springs, such as Ba'ălath-bĕ'ēr, "proprietrix of the well," and Ba'al-pĕrāṣîm, "owner of the breaking forth of water"; Ba'als of mountains, such as Ba'al-Pĕ'ôr, Ba'al-Ḥermôn, Ba'al-Carmel, Ba'al-Lĕbānôn; ba'als of stones, such as Ba'al-ḥammān, "owner of the pillar." The object in which the god dwelt was known as *bêth-ēl*, "house of deity" (Greek *baitulos*). The *ăshērā*, or

sacred pole, was identified so completely with the divinity inhabiting it as to become the name of a goddess. Images were unknown in the earliest period. Other ba'als were named after the places where they were worshiped, without mention of the particular sacred object in which they resided; e. g. Ba'al-Ṣîdôn, Ba'al-Ṣûr (Tyre), Ba'alat-Gĕbal.

Powers presiding over departments of human life were called by names expressing kinship or authority, which described them as owners of *men* in the same way that ba'al described them as owners of *things*. In the primitive matriarchal stage of social organization the chief tribal gods were naturally feminine, and were regarded as the mothers of their people. Male divinities were not called "father," since the fathers were men of other tribes, who only "came in" to the mothers temporarily, and were usually unknown to the children. They

were known as *Ḫāl*, "maternal uncle," or *Aḥ*, "brother," i. e., "fellow-clansman." They might also be addressed as *Ăḏôn* (*Adonis*), *Mār*, or *Rabb*, i. e., "master." When subsequently the family assumed the polyandrous form, the child still did not know its father, but only a group of husbands of the mother, any one of whom might be either father or uncle. Under these circumstances male divinities could not yet be called "father," but only *ʿAmm*, "father-uncle." Personal names compounded with this divine title are exceedingly common in all the Semitic languages, and are to be regarded as survivals from the polyandrous period. When finally fraternal polyandry gave place to polygamy and the patriarchal organization of the family, the word *Aḇ* came to mean "father," and was applied as a title to male gods. As more complex social forms arose through the grouping of tribes into nations and the founding of monarchies,

male gods were called by the same titles as the human rulers. Thus we find *Melek* (*Milcôm*, *Môlech*), "king"; *Dān*, "judge"; *Ḳôsh*, "lord"; *Shēm*, "name"; *'Elyôn*, "high," used as divine titles in all the Semitic languages.

Some of the departmental divinities of primitive Semitic religion were 'Ashtar (Ishtar, Ashtoreth, Astarte), the goddess of reproduction; 'Ănāth, the goddess of war; Ṣîd, "the hunter," after whom Sidon was named; Gād, "fortune"; Mĕnî (Manât) "fate"; Mûth, "death"; Ruḍâ, "goodwill"; 'Azar, "help"; Peleṭ, "deliverance"; Āwen, "strength"; Ṣedeḳ, "righteousness"; Shālēm (Shālôm), "peace."

Powers presiding over mental states were known as *rûḥôth*, "spirits," because they took possession of men. Every emotion and every other form of intellectual activity had its appropriate presiding genius. Such, for instance, were Gîl, "joy"; Wadd, "love";

Paḥad, "fear." A survival of this form of thought in Hebrew is seen in such expressions as "spirit of wisdom, spirit of might, spirit of jealousy, spirit of error, spirit of deep sleep," which show that originally these powers were conceived as independent divinities.

Spirits of the dead could enter inanimate things, such as sticks and stones, causing in them motion, or endowing them with magical properties. Heaps of stones, or pillars set upon graves, were believed to be occupied by them. In Nabatæan, Palmyrene, and Aramic *nefesh*, "soul," means also "tombstone." All the phenomena of rappings and levitations that occur in modern séances were known to the ancient Semites, and were explained by them in the same way as by modern spiritualists. In like manner divinities of other sorts could reveal their nature and their will by causing motion in physical objects. The courses of the sun,

moon, and stars, the floating of clouds, the crash of thunder, the flash of lightning, the cry of beasts, the flight of birds, the rustle of leaves, the babble of water, were all means through which they manifested themselves.

Spirits of the dead could also obsess the bodies of living men causing diseases of every description. Ancestors retained a keen interest in their posterity, and actively intervened in the events of their lives. Enemies preserved their original hostility to their foes. So also departmental gods showed their favor or disfavor by the blessings or the curses that they sent upon men. Health or sickness, pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow, success or failure, fertility or barrenness, peace or war, life or death, were allotted by them.

Spirits of the dead could also appear in dreams and visions displaying the same form in which they had last been seen on earth. They could speak in audible tones,

though with weak and trembling voices that corresponded with their ethereal nature. Among the Arabs their voice was known as *ṣadâ*, "echo." They could also take possession of the intelligences of men, causing in them, ecstasy, divided consciousness, clairvoyance, and all the other mysterious phenomena of the subliminal self. Among the Arabs the spirit that revealed himself to a medium was known as *râ'î*, the same word as the Hebrew *rô'eh*, "seer." Among the Hebrews he was called *yiddĕ'ônî*, "the knowing one." Like powers were possessed by the other classes of spirits.

The specialist in the interpretation of physical phenomena was the *kâhin*, or "soothsayer." In Arabia he observed the omens; or, where no omens were forthcoming, drew sticks or arrows as lots in the presence of the divinity, and gave his response to the inquirer in sentences of

rhymed prose. In Babylonia he was an astrologer, augur, and haruspex. He was the prototype of the ancient Hebrew *kôhēn*, or "priest," who ascertained the will of God by means of the sacred lot of Urim and Thummim.

The specialist in the interpretation of the events of life was the *ḥākām* or "sage." He studied human nature to see what actions resulted beneficially and what disastrously, and embodied the results of his observation in brief, pithy proverbs that served as rules of conduct for succeeding generations. He was the physician who knew what drugs or magic spells relieved pain, and he possessed the incantations by which evil spirits could be expelled. He was the prototype of the *ḥākām*, or "sage," of later Hebrew religion, whose wise sayings have come down to us in the Book of Proverbs and the other "Wisdom" literature of the Old Testament.

The specialist in phenomena of the subliminal self was the *rô'eh*, or "seer." In dream, vision, or ecstasy, he was possessed by a god, and uttered in poetry the message that he received. He was the prototype of the seers and prophets of the later Hebrew religion.

On the basis of the phenomena that have just been considered, the ancient Semites conceived of their gods as ethereal beings that were able to move at will with lightning-like rapidity to any place where they wished to manifest themselves. As an ancient Babylonian exorcism says, —

The highest walls, the thickest walls, like a flood they pass.
From house to house they break through.
No door can shut them out, no bolt can turn them back.
Through the door like a snake they glide,
Through the hinge like a wind they blow.

Because of their superhuman powers they were supposed to be charged with a

mysterious energy that made it dangerous for men to come into contact with them. This uncanny quality the Semites described by derivatives of the root *ḳ-d-sh*, which means "to be separate," or "sacred." In Hebrew the adjective was *ḳādôsh*, which in the later development of the language meant "holy," in an ethical sense; but which originally denoted "set apart," or "taboo." This separateness the gods communicated to the objects in which they resided, the phenomena in which they manifested themselves, and the persons whom they possessed. Taboo was so highly infectious that if a person touched a holy thing, or under some circumstances even saw or heard it, he himself became taboo. The unfortunate man was a source of peril to every one that met him, and if he could not be un-tabooed by some process of lustration, he must be put to death to avoid the spread of the infection of "holiness."

For this reason the ancient Semites lived in constant fear of their divinities, lest through contact with some sacred object they might bring destruction upon themselves.

Yet, in spite of their perilous character, the gods were regarded as friendly powers. This appears in the titles of kinship and of authority that have been noted above. It appears also in the predicates used in personal names that are found in all the dialects, and that must, therefore, be extremely ancient. These names affirm that the god in question is great, lofty, glorious, luminous, that he is wise, perfect, righteous, good, and peaceful; that he knows, loves, blesses, is generous, is near, hears, vindicates and helps; that he gives (children), builds (the family), sows, preserves in life.

The location of sanctuaries was determined by the presence of objects in which superhuman powers dwelt. To guard the

holiness of the spot, a wall, or line of stones, was placed around the sacred object. By the Arabs such an enclosure was called *ḥaram*, or *ḥima*, "withdrawn." By the Hebrews it was called *bāmā*, "high place." Everything that entered the sacred precinct was taboo. Criminals were safe so long as they remained within it, and animals that strayed into it might not be recovered, but were devoted to the god. High places were sometimes in the charge of a custodian, who might be the *kâhin*, or "diviner," who obtained omens from the object of worship.

Before entering the holy place the worshiper prepared himself by fasting and by washing, lest any taboo offensive to the god might chance to cling to him. He also removed his garments and his sandals, lest they might convey some taboo into the place, or carry out a taboo. On entering the sacred enclosure he covered his head with a cloth, or with his hands, that he

might not run the risk of death through incautiously looking upon the god. He also cried out to give warning of his approach. He then danced or marched around the holy stone, shouting the name of the god as he went, and finally stood before it in a devout attitude. If thus far no harm befell him, he ventured to stroke or to kiss the holy stone.

Then followed the slaying of a victim. The blood was given to the gods by being poured on the ground or smeared upon the holy stone. Altars were probably unknown in the earliest period. The flesh was eaten in the holy place by the worshiper in a sacramental meal of communion. Only domestic animals were offered. The firstborn of these were taboo, and must be sacrificed. Firstborn children were also devoted, and other sorts of human sacrifice were not unknown. Circumcision, cuttings in the flesh, and cutting of the hair existed among the

Semites from the remotest antiquity, and may perhaps be regarded as conventional substitutes for human sacrifice. Offerings of food, and of other things that men counted valuable, were also acceptable to the gods. When the sacrifice was complete, prayer was uttered for blessings upon oneself, or curses upon one's enemies, and vows were made to offer a particular sort of sacrifice if one received a favor. Sexual excess was also practiced at sanctuaries in honor of 'Ashtar, the goddess of reproduction.

As holy days the ancient Semites kept the new moon and also probably the Sabbath, which was originally, as in Babylonia, a taboo day falling upon the seventh, fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of the lunar month. A spring feast was celebrated when the lambs were born, and an autumnal festival when the date-harvest was gathered. At these times feuds were dropped between hostile tribes, and pil-

grimages were made to the more famous sanctuaries.

In all these features of primitive Semitism a close resemblance is observable to the forms of later Hebrew religion. However far Israel developed, it never wholly outgrew the cult that had been originated by its forefathers in the desert. It is also noteworthy that early Semitic religion was better adapted than other faiths to become a basis for the spiritual religion of Israel. Among the Indo-Europeans the god was identified with the physical phenomenon, while among the Semites he was distinguished from it as its *ba'al;* and it was known as *beth-el*, or "house of deity." The preference for general designations instead of personal names of gods also favored a monotheistic development, since all these titles expressed transcendence, and could easily be regarded as epithets of one supreme divinity. Accordingly, even in the primitive

Semitic period, we must recognize the beginning of that unique revelation of God which is contained in the Old Testament, and which reaches its culmination in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

II

THE PATRIARCHAL PERIOD

FOR the religion of the period between the migration of the Hebrews out of their primitive home in the Arabian desert and their organization into a nation by Moses no contemporary sources of information have survived. The traditions in Genesis were handed down by word of mouth for centuries before they received their present literary fixing. Modern critics are agreed that this book is compiled out of three parallel histories: the J document, which calls God Jahveh (Jehovah), written in the kingdom of Judah about 850–800 B. C.; the E document, which calls God El or Elohim, written in the kingdom of Ephraim about 800–750 B. C.; and P, or the Priestly document, written in Baby-

lonia about 500 B. C. By Massoretic Hebrew tradition Abraham is placed 720 years before Moses, who must have flourished about 1200 B. C. There is thus an interval of 1100 years between Abraham and the earliest of the documents of Genesis, and of 1400 years between him and the latest of these documents. Under these conditions we cannot expect to find exact history in the stories of the patriarchs, and as a matter of fact, a close examination of the traditions makes it evident that only a few of them really date from the pre-Mosaic age. J and E in their tales of the forefathers depict the beliefs of Israel in the days of Elijah and Elisha, and P shows us only what the post-exilic Jews in Babylonia supposed the religion of their ancestors to have been. To extract from these late documents genuine memories of pre-Mosaic times is a difficult critical problem.

A question of fundamental importance

is whether Yahweh,[1] the God of Moses, was worshiped already by the patriarchs. On this matter the Pentateuchal histories do not agree. The Judæan document represents Yahweh as adored by the forefathers from the days of Adam onward.[2] In the J sections of Ex. iii, when Yahweh appears to Moses, he does not reveal his name as new, or explain its meaning, but assumes that it is well known.[3] On the other hand, the E document throughout Genesis carefully abstains from the use of the divine name Yahweh, and employs El or Elohim, that is, "God." In its account of the theophany to Moses,[4] Moses is ignorant of the personal name of the deity who appears to

[1] This name of God was written in Hebrew with the consonants יהוה, which are transliterated by YHWH, or with Latin pronunciation of the letters, by JHVH. The pronunciation Yehowah, or Jehovah, is a monstrosity due to a combination of these consonants with the vowels of the word for Lord. The original pronunciation was probably Yahwéh.

[2] Gen. iv. 3 f., 26.

[3] Cf. Ex. iii. 7, 16; v. 1, 3.

[4] Ex. iii. 10–15.

him, and regards the people in Egypt as ignorant, for he says: "When they shall say unto me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" Thereupon God replies: "Ehyeh ["I will be," = Yahweh, "He will be"] hath sent me unto you." This is also the view of the P document. It avoids the name Yahweh in patriarchal times, and in Ex. vi. 2 f. expressly declares: "God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Yahweh: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Shaddai; but by my name Yahweh I was not known unto them."

Jewish and Christian ecclesiastical tradition has followed the opinion of J, that Yahweh was worshiped by the Hebrews from the earliest times, and many modern critics have adopted this view on the strength of the fact that J is the oldest document of the Pentateuch; but there are a number of considerations that make it

probable that the opinion of E and P is more correct.

1. Yahweh is a Semitic name belonging to a dialect closely akin to Biblical Hebrew. It is inconceivable that this dialect was spoken by Adam and his immediate descendants. J is certainly unhistorical, therefore, when it traces this name back to the foundation of the world; and there is no guarantee that it is any more historical when it assigns the name to the age of the patriarchs.

2. If Yahweh had been worshiped by the patriarchs, they would have used his name as an element in their own names; but not a single Yahweh-compound occurs in all the lengthy genealogies of Genesis, even in those of J. The first name of this sort is Yehoshua' (Joshua).

3. The infrequency of names compounded with Yahweh before the time of David is evidence that the worship of this god was

introduced by Moses. There are six names of this type in the period between Moses and David, Joshua, Jonathan, Joash, Jotham, Joel and Abijah, all in the families of religious leaders. In the time of David the number rises to seventeen, and all but four belong to royal or priestly families.

4. The earliest literary prophets, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah, never speak of dealings of Yahweh with the patriarchs, but begin his revelation to Israel at the time of the exodus. Hos. xiii. 4 says expressly, "I am Yahweh thy God from the land of Egypt."[1] This shows that they agree with the view of E and of P.

5. It is easy to see how the tradition of J might have arisen, if that of E had been true; while it is not easy to see how the tradition of E could have arisen, if that of J had been true. If Yahweh had really been

[1] Cf. Am. ii. 9, 10; iii. 1; ix. 7; Hos. ii. 14; ix. 10; xii. 13; Isa. x. 26; Mic. vi. 4–5.

the primeval god of Israel, there would have been no motive for transforming him into a god first taught by Moses; but, if he had first been adopted at the time of the exodus, it would have been natural to invent a higher antiquity for him.

For these reasons it seems clear that we must follow the tradition of E, P, and the early prophets, that Yahweh was not known to the patriarchs, but was first revealed to Israel through Moses. This conclusion raises the question, What gods were worshiped by the Hebrews in the pre-Mosaic age? The assumption of the Pentateuchal writers was that the numerous divine names that had come down in patriarchal tradition were merely titles of one supreme God. Just as the theologians of Islam sought to destroy evidences of pre-Muhammadan heathenism in Arabia, so the prophetic historians of Israel retold the tales of the patriarchs in accordance with the religious

beliefs of their own age. Yet even this process did not succeed in obliterating traces of pre-Mosaic polytheism.

The Mosaic commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods beside me," implies that hitherto "other gods" have been worshiped by Israel. In Josh. xxiv. 2, 14, 23 (E) Joshua exhorts the people, "Put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt," and in Gen. xxxv. 2, 4 (E) these gods are mentioned as brought into Canaan by the family of Jacob. Ezekiel repeatedly asserts that the Israelites were polytheists before Yahweh's revelation through Moses,[1] and the same is claimed by Amos v. 26, if the translation in the past tense be correct.

According to E and P, the patriarchs used the divine names El and Elohim. Their use of El is confirmed by proper names such as Ishma-el, Isra-el, Jerahme-el;

[1] Ezek. xx. 8, 16, 23 ff.; xxiii. 3, 8.

but, as we saw above,[1] this is the oldest and most universal designation of deity in primitive Semitic polydæmonism. Names precisely similar in formation to Isra-el are found all over the Semitic world, and in them El is used in a purely polytheistic sense. Elohim is a plural, probably formed irregularly from El. In Hebrew it often has a plural meaning, but it is also used as a singular, either with reference to Yahweh or to other gods. The plural meaning must be original; and the singular, must be a result of the triumph of monolatry over polytheism. The patriarchal stories of Genesis have still an inkling of the primitive polytheistic significance of the name, since they are conscious of no religious antagonism between the forefathers and the people of other races with whom they come into contact. Both El and Elohim are used freely by the patriarchs in talking with the Canaanites,

[1] p. 4.

and by the Canaanites in talking with the patriarchs. Abram recognizes the god of Melchizedek.[1] There is a revelation of Elohim to Abimelech, king of Gerar.[2] The family of Laban in Mesopotamia worships the same god as the family of Abraham.[3]

Most of the titles of divinities that we have found in primitive Semitic religion appear also in personal or tribal names that are assigned by tradition to the pre-Mosaic age. Thus Ba'al, "owner," is found in Ashbel and the personal name Ba'al; Aḥ, "brother," in Aḥi-ram, and Aḥi-shaḥar; 'Amm, "father-uncle," in 'Ammon, 'Amram, 'Ammi-el, and 'Ammi-hud; Ab, "father," in Ab-ram, Abi-hud, and Abi-shua'; Melek, "king," in Malcam; and the feminine form, "queen," in Milcah, and Hammoleketh. Similar is Sarah, "princess," in Babylonian, "queen." Dan, "judge," is the

[1] Gen. xiv. 18–20.
[2] Gen. xx. 3, 6.
[3] Gen. xxiv. 31, 50; xxxi. 53.

name of one of the sons of Jacob; and the feminine form Dinah is one of his daughters. Shem, "name," is one of the sons of Noah and also occurs in Shem-ed. 'Elyon, "the high one," was the god of Melchizedek, king of Salem, who was also worshiped by Abram.[1] According to Philo of Byblos, he was a Phœnician god. Shaddai, which, according to P, was the name by which God was known to the patriarchs,[2] is probably connected with the Babylonian root *shadû*, "be high," and is similar in meaning to 'Elyon.

Besides these common Semitic titles of divinities, we find in the patriarchal tradition traces of the worship of particular heathen gods. The teraphim were brought from Mesopotamia in the family of Jacob.[3] There is strong probability that these were images of ancestors. They represented the

[1] Gen. xiv. 18–20.
[2] Gen. xvii. 1; xxviii. 3; xxxv. 11; xlviii. 3; Ex. vi. 3.
[3] Gen. xxxi. 19, 30–35.

human form.[1] They were household gods,[2] and they were used for obtaining oracles.[3] Etymologically the name may be connected with *rephaim*, "shades," or with the Babylonian *tarpu*, "specter." Ancestor-worship is well attested among the Hebrews after the conquest of Canaan.[4]

The following nature-gods survive in personal names of the patriarchal period: Zebul, "dwelling," a synonym of "sky" (cf. Baʿal-zebul), in Zebulon; Jamin, "South" (cf. Zephon, "north"), in Ben-jamin; Shaḥar, "dawn," in Aḥi-shaḥar. The worship of totem-animals is indicated by the tribal names Leah, "wild cow"; Rachel, "ewe"; Deborah, "bee"; Reuben (Greek, Reubel), "lion"; Simeon, "hyena"; Levi, "serpent" (cf. leviathan); Zimran, "mountain sheep";

[1] I Sam. xix. 13, 16.

[2] Gen. xxxi. 30, 34; Judg. xvii. 5; I Sam. xix. 13, 16.

[3] I Sam. xv. 23; II Kings xxiii. 24; Ezek. xxi. 21; Zech. x. 2.

[4] Deut. xxvi. 14; Hos. ix. 4; Jer. xvi. 7.

Becher, "young camel"; Tola', "worm"; Nun, "fish"; Susi, "belonging to the horse"; Caleb, "dog"; Gemalli, "belonging to the camel"; Ḥoglah, "partridge" — the latter given as contemporaries of Moses. The indication of totemism in these names is supported by the fact that images of animals were worshiped by the later Hebrews,[1] and by the existence of laws prohibiting the eating of certain beasts. The narrative of Genesis constantly assumes that holy trees were planted, and holy stones erected by the patriarchs, and this opinion is confirmed by the names Elon, "holy tree" and Eli-ṣur, or Ṣuri-el, "rock is god." Asher, the son of Jacob, is the same name as the Assyrian god Ashur, who is the male counterpart of the Ashera, or sacred pole.

Of the Semitic departmental gods we meet Gad, "fortune," in the name of a son of Jacob; and Meni, "fate," perhaps in

[1] Exod. xxxii. 4; I Kings xii. 28; II Kings xviii. 4.

Manasseh, "fate has lifted up." Ye'ush (Jeush), a son of Esau, is the exact phonetic equivalent of Yaghuth an Arabian divinity. Rechab, a clan of Judah, appears as a god Rechab-el, and in the proper name Bar-Rechab, in the inscription of the Aramæan king Panammu. Na'aman, "delight," a Syrian god, is a son of Benjamin. Such names as Isaac, "he laughs," Jacob, "he supplants," Joseph, "he adds," seem to be primarily names of gods rather than of individuals. They are formed in the same manner as the divine names Yahweh (Jahveh), "he causes to live," (?) and Yaghuth, "he helps." Apparently they were originally departmental gods after whom the tribes were named. In Babylonian and Egyptian inscriptions we meet the forms Jacob-el and Joseph-el, which are probably not to be translated "God supplants," and "God adds," but "the god who supplants," and "the god who adds."

In like manner Isra-el means "the god who strives;" Ishma-el, "the god who hears;" and Jerahme-el, "the god who pities."

In view of these facts it is evident that the religion of the pre-Mosaic Hebrews cannot have differed greatly from that of the other early Semites. The founder of the Hebrew religion was not Abraham but Moses. Many gods were worshiped, but each tribe had a chief male divinity, after whom usually it was named. The rites practiced in the cult of these gods must have been practically the same as those of primitive Semitism.

III

THE MOSAIC PERIOD

In the time of Moses (about 1200 B. C.) we pass from the pre-historic to the historic period of the religion of Israel. Even here, however, contemporary records are almost, if not entirely, lacking. Our main authorities are the same three documents that we noted above as sources for the history of patriarchal times, namely the Judæan document (J), written 850–800 B. C.; the Ephraimite document (E), written 800–750 B. C.; the Priestly document (P), written about 500 B. C. To these are added Deuteronomy (D), that was first promulgated in 619 B. C.[1] The earlier of these documents stand near enough to the times of Moses to have preserved an authentic

[1] II Kings xxii. 8 ff.

tradition; and since they agree in regard to the main features of his life and are confirmed by the facts of later history, we may accept their testimony as trustworthy.

The tradition that some at least of the Hebrew tribes were enslaved by an Egyptian monarch, and compelled to build store-cities called Pithom and Raamses,[1] is confirmed by the discovery in Egypt of ruins in which were found the names both of King Ramses II and of the place Pi-Tum. Môshé (Moses) is the Egyptian word *môsé* "child" which occurs as an element in the names of several Pharaohs. Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron,[2] is also an Egyptian name, and so is Putiel, his maternal grandfather. The name Phinehas reappears in the priestly family of Eli.[3] The account of Moses' flight from Egypt and his long residence at Sinai is unquestionably histor-

[1] Ex. i. 11. [2] Ex. vi. 25. [3] I Sam. iv. 11.

ical, since only thus can we understand why this mountain was the goal of the exodus, or how the Hebrews entered at once into such friendly relations with the tribes that dwelt in its vicinity. According to both J and E, Moses married a daughter of the priest of the Kenites, or Midianites, who dwelt at Sinai-Horeb.

The chief divinity of this people was Yahweh, who, as we saw above,[1] was not the ancestral god of Israel. The evidence in support of this view is as follows: —

1. Hebrew tradition unanimously connects Yahweh with Sinai-Horeb in such a way as to indicate that originally he was the god of this mountain.[2] In the Song of Deborah[3] he comes from Sinai to rescue his people in Canaan, so also in the ancient poem in Deut. xxxiii. 2, and in Hab. iii. 3.

[1] p. 23 ff.

[2] Cf. Ex. iii. 1 (E); iii. 12 (E); xviii. 1 (E); iii. 5 (J); iii. 18 (J); xix. 4 (J); Ex. xxxiii. 1–4.

[3] Judg. v. 4 f.

When Elijah wishes to find Yahweh he goes to Horeb, the mount of God.[1]

2. In Ex. iv. 24–26 (J) Moses has neglected the rite of circumcision, and Yahweh seeks to slay him; but Zipporah, his wife, who knows what is required, takes a flint and fulfils the rite upon her son; then the divine wrath is appeased. Here Zipporah the Kenite is regarded as better instructed in the religion of Yahweh than her Hebrew husband.

3. In the Elohistic narrative of Ex. xviii. 1–12, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, appears as a priest of Yahweh, who initiates the elders of Israel into his religion. In the following verses, Ex. xviii. 14–27, he is the originator of Israel's judicial system.

4. The Kenites were attached to Israel from the time of the exodus onward in such a way as to show that they were worshipers of Yahweh. According to Numb. x.

[1] I Kings xix. 8.

29–33 (J) and Judg. i. 16 (J), they went up with Israel into Canaan.[1] When Saul determined to destroy the Amalekites, he sent messengers to the Kenites to warn them.[2]

5. The Kenites appear in the Old Testament as enthusiasts for Yahweh, and as representatives of his pure, original religion. Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, was the slayer of Sisera and the deliverer of Israel.[3] The Rechabites were a branch of the Kenites.[4] One of them, Jonadab, was invited by Jehu to come and see his zeal for Yahweh, and assisted him in the extermination of the worshipers of the Tyrian Baal. In Jer. xxxv. the prophet holds up the Rechabites as examples of fidelity to the good old ways of Yahweh.

6. The mark of Yahweh borne by Ḳayin (Cain), the eponym ancestor of Ḳayin (the

[1] Cf. Josh. xv. 22, 57; Judg. iv. 11; v. 24.
[2] I Sam. xv. 5–7.
[3] Judg. v. 24.
[4] I Chr. ii. 55.

Kenites), according to Gen. iv. 15, which protected him from harm as he wandered about the land, indicates that from time immemorial the Kenites had the emblem of Yahweh tatooed upon them. If so, he must have been their ancestral god. In view of these facts it seems necessary to assume that Yahweh was originally the god of the Kenites, and that knowledge of him was first brought to Israel through Moses.

What his original character was before he became the god of Israel can only be conjectured. The lower elements in the later Hebrew conception of him may be regarded as survivals from the pre-Mosaic period. The description of the theophany in Ex. xix. when "the mount was altogether on smoke, because Yahweh descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly," suggests that Sinai was one of the numerous active volcanoes that

once existed in the land of Midian.[1] Down to the latest times in poetical passages of the Old Testament Yahweh is described as a god who appears in earthquake, fire, and storm. This suggests that originally he was a volcanic deity. As to the primitive meaning of his name nothing certain is known. The etymology of E in Ex. iii. 14, which interprets it as meaning "he who will be," is certainly the product of late theological reflection. Other possible meanings are "he who causes to live," or "he who causes to fall" (rain, lightning, enemies?). For us it is more important to know what he became for Israel than what he was originally as the god of the Kenites.

While Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law in Sinai, Yahweh, the god of the mountain, appeared to him in a fiery (volcanic?) glow in a thorn-bush. There are three parallel accounts of this vision:

[1] Cf. Ex. iii. 2; I Kings xix. 11 f.

Ex. iii. 1, 4*b*, 6, 9*b*–15, 19–22 (from E); Ex. iii. 2–4*a*, 5, 7–9*a*, 16–18 (from J); and Ex. vi. 2–8 (from P). These accounts agree that the central point of the revelation was Yahweh's determination to deliver Israel from Egypt and to give it the land of Canaan.

In this revelation two new conceptions were involved. The first was the moral character of Yahweh. The Hebrews had no natural claim on him, and had no reason to expect that he, the god of an alien people, would do anything for them. Nevertheless, he took pity upon their sufferings, and determined to rescue them. A being who thus felt compassion for the oppressed, and came to their help, even though they did not belong to him and did not worship him, was a new sort of divinity in the Semitic world. He was a god with a moral character, who transcended the ancient limitations of tribal religion.

Thus, whatever Yahweh may have been for the Kenites, he became something vastly greater when Moses first conceived of him as one who freely and lovingly chose Israel to be his people.

In the second place, Yahweh's determination to deliver Israel implied that he was more powerful than other divinities. The mighty gods of Egypt could not withstand him, nor could the gods of Canaan. He was no mere local ba'al, limited in operation to the particular holy spot over which he presided, but he was a being who could manifest his power even in distant lands. In these two new ideas that were destined to work a revolution in the history of religion we cannot fail to recognize a genuine revelation of God to Moses.

In the strength of this revelation Moses returned to Egypt, where he succeeded in winning the belief of the people that he was a prophet sent by the god of Sinai. He de-

manded of the Pharaoh permission for Israel to journey into the desert to sacrifice. At first this request was refused; but in consequence of a series of catastrophes, the Pharaoh at last grew alarmed, and gave the Israelites permission to depart. Then, repenting of his weakness, he pursued after them with the intention of slaying them. Shut in between the sea and the enemy, their destruction seemed inevitable, but at the critical moment deliverance came. A strong east wind that blew all night drove back the shallow water of the Sea of Sedge to such an extent that the fugitives were able to ford the channel connecting it with the Red Sea and thus to make their escape. In this event Moses and the rest of the nation saw indisputable evidence that Yahweh had indeed chosen Israel to be his people, and that he was more powerful than all the gods of Egypt.

When Sinai was reached, according to

all the documents, Moses made a covenant between Israel and Yahweh on the basis of a code called "the Book of the Covenant," or "the Ten Words." This code has come down to us in the Pentateuch in four different forms. The first is a brief recension incorporated by J in Ex. xxxiv. 10–26. It is called "the Words of the Covenant, the Ten Words," and is said to have been written by Moses on tablets in Mount Sinai.[1] The second is a much more expanded recension incorporated by the E document in Ex. xx. 23–xxiii. 19. It is called "the Book of the Covenant," and is also said to have been written by Moses at Sinai.[2] The third is found in Deut. v. 6–21. It is called "the Covenant," and is said to have been written by God on two tables of stone and given to Moses at Horeb-Sinai.[3] The fourth is a late intrusion in the E document in Ex. xx. 2–17. Here it is called "the

[1] Ex. xxxiv. 10, 27 f. [2] Ex. xxiv. 4, 7. [3] Deut. v. 3, 22.

Words," and is said to have been proclaimed by God at Sinai.[1] The similar terms used in speaking of these documents, and the similar circumstances under which they were produced, show that they are only variant forms of the same original. When we examine their contents more closely, it appears that in large measure they are parallel to one another. The relation of the parallels is exhibited in the following table:

	J	E	E²	D
1	Ex. xxxiv. 14	Ex. xx. 23*a*	Ex. xx. 3	Deut. v. 7
2	Ex. xxxiv. 17	Ex. xx. 23*b*	Ex. xx. 4	Deut. v. 8
3	Ex. xxxiv. 19	Ex. xxii. 29*b*–30		
4	Ex. xxxiv. 20*c*	Ex. xxiii. 15*b*	Ex. xx. 7	Deut. v. 11
5	Ex. xxxiv. 21	Ex. xxiii. 12	Ex. xx. 8	Deut. v. 12
6	Ex. xxxiv. 18	Ex. xxiii. 15		
7	Ex. xxxiv. 22*a*	Ex. xxiii. 16*a*		
8	Ex. xxxiv. 22*b*	Ex. xxiii. 16*b*		
9	Ex. xxxiv. 23	Ex. xxiii. 17		
10	Ex. xxxiv. 25*a*	Ex. xxiii. 18*a*		
11	Ex. xxxiv. 25*b*	Ex. xxiii. 18*b*		
12	Ex. xxxiv. 26*a*	Ex. xxiii. 19*a*		
13	Ex. xxxiv. 26*b*	Ex. xxiii. 19*b*		
14			Ex. xx. 12	Deut. v. 16
15			Ex. xx. 13	Deut. v. 17
16			Ex. xx. 14	Deut. v. 18
17			Ex. xx. 15	Deut. v. 19
18			Ex. xx. 16	Deut. v. 20
19			Ex. xx. 17	Deut. v. 21

[1] Ex. xx. 1.

It is obvious that laws which are found in only one recension cannot be primitive, but must be due to expansion in that particular recension. Only laws that appear in two or more recensions can have stood in the original Book of the Covenant. The laws numbered 1, 2, 4, 5 in the table are found in all four recensions, and must, therefore, have belonged to the earliest draft. Concerning the remainder of the code, the recensions divide into two groups, J and E agreeing in a different legislation from E^2 and D. As to which of these groups we should prefer there can be no doubt. J and E belong to the ninth or the eighth century B. C., and stand much nearer to Mosaic times than E^2 and D which belong to the seventh century. Laws 2 and 5 are not so primitive in E^2 and D as in J and E. Moreover, the Covenant of E^2 and D eliminates ritual provisions and substitutes ethical ones in their stead, thus showing the influence of the ethical pro-

phetic movement of the eighth century. J and E agree in thirteen laws; but, according to Ex. xxxiv. 28, the code contained originally only "ten words"; three laws, therefore, must have been added before the J and the E traditions diverged. These added laws are found most probably in Nos. 6, 7, 8, which may be regarded as an amplification of No. 9 designed to adapt the code to the conditions of settled life in Canaan. The original Book of the Covenant, or Ten Words, may then be reconstructed as follows: —

1. Thou shalt worship no other god.
2. Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.
3. All that openeth the womb is mine.
4. None shall appear before me empty-handed.
5. Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest.
6. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before Yahweh-Elohim.
7. Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread.

8. The fat of my sacrifice shall not remain until the morning.
9. The first of thy first fruits thou shalt bring unto the abode of Yahweh thy God.
10. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk.

The first commandment, "Thou shalt worship no other god," was a logical corollary of the Mosaic conception of Yahweh. If he had chosen Israel, and was strong enough to redeem it, he alone deserved to be worshiped. This was not monotheism, but only monolatry. It did not say, "Thou shalt not believe that there are other gods," but only, "Thou shalt not worship any other god." This was the standpoint of Mosaism and also of the old Hebrew religion down to the times of the prophets. It appears in the ancient song of Deborah [1] and in the ancient personal name Micah, "Who is like Yahweh." [2] Cf. also Ex. xv. 11: "Who is like unto thee, O Yahweh, among the gods."

[1] Judg. v. 3–11. [2] Judg. xvii. 1.

Through this doctrine Moses transformed Israel from an aggregation of independent tribes into a nation.

The second commandment, "Thou shalt make thee no molten gods," or as the E recension reads, "Gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make unto you," is not a general prohibition of images, but only of the gold and silver idols used in Egypt and Canaan. All the sacred objects of primitive Semitism were retained by Moses in the worship of Yahweh. Sinai still remained "the mount of god." The sacred spring at Ḳadesh, "the sanctuary," was still called 'En-mishpaṭ, "the spring of decision."[1] According to E, Moses himself set up twelve *maṣṣēbôth*, or "standing stones," at Sinai.[2] The ark also was a visible representation of Yahweh. When it went forward Moses said:

"Rise up, Yahweh, let thine enemies be scattered;
And let them that hate thee flee before thee."[3]

[1] Gen. xiv. 7. [2] Ex. xxiv. 4. [3] Num. x. 35 J.

When it did not go into battle, Israel was defeated.[1] The sweeping prohibition of all images in the second commandment according to E[2] and D[2] is a fruit of the theology of the prophets. It did not exist in Mosaism or in the early religion of Israel.[3]

The third law, "All that openeth the womb is mine," demands sacrifice of the firstborn of man and beast. In the J recension, Ex. xxxiv. 20, it is provided that children shall be redeemed, but this is not found in the parallel E recension (Ex. xxii. 29), "The firstborn of thy children shalt thou give unto me," and, therefore, cannot be original. Sacrifice of firstborn children was a primitive Semitic custom, and, as archæology and history show, lasted in Israel down to the exile. It can hardly be doubted, therefore, that this law was understood at first with gruesome literalness. Ezek. xx. 25 f.

[1] Num. xiv. 44 f. J; Josh. vii. 3 f. J; cf. Josh. vii. 6 J.
[2] Ex. xx. 4; Deut. v. 8.
[3] See p. 80.

goes so far as to say that Yahweh gave Israel this particular commandment in wrath in order that he might make them desolate.[1]

The remaining laws of the code are all adaptations of earlier Semitic institutions. In other respects also we must suppose that Moses left most of the rites of primitive Semitism unchanged.

The covenant code contains no ethical requirements, nevertheless these were logically involved in the Mosaic conception of Yahweh. The god who took pity upon an alien race and delivered it from its bondage in Egypt was one who naturally required his worshipers to help the distressed. In the earliest historical records Yahweh already appears as the champion of righteousness and the friend of the oppressed. The germ of this development must be sought at the beginning of the religion of Israel, even

[1] See p. 94.

though no precise information on the subject has come down to us; and in this fundamentally ethical character we see the clearest evidence of the divine origin of Mosaism.

IV

THE PERIOD OF THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

THE Canaanites were a Semitic people closely akin to the Hebrews and to the Arabs. Their earliest religion, as archæological research shows, was practically identical with that of the primitive Semites described in chapter I.[1] This religion, however, was greatly modified by long-continued Babylonian influence. From inscriptions discovered within the last few years it is now known that between 3000 and 1700 B. C. Palestine stood almost constantly under the rule of Babylonia. The result was that, as early as 2000 B. C., the civilization of Babylonia was thoroughly established in Canaan. The depth of the impression is

[1] See Paton, articles "'Ashtart, Baal, Canaan," in Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

strikingly shown by the fact that in 1400 B. C., after Canaan had been two hundred years under Egyptian rule, its people still used Babylonian for correspondence with the Pharaoh and with one another in the so-called Tell el-Amarna letters. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that Babylonian religion gained a firm foothold in the land, and was subsequently inherited from the Canaanites by the Hebrews.[1]

The sanctuaries of Canaan were as numerous as the gods. Many of them can be recognized by the meaning of the place-names that occur in Egyptian inscriptions prior to the Hebrew conquest, in the Tell el-Amarna letters, and in the Old Testament. Thus we meet Ḳadesh, "the sanctuary"; Ḥosah, "asylum"; Ṭibḥath, "sacrifice"; Norp'a, "healing-place"; Akshaph, "sorcery"; Hekalayim, "two temples"; Bit-

[1] See Paton, *Early History of Syria and Palestine*, chap. iv.

arḥa, "house of the new moon"; Bit-NIN-IB, "house of the (Babylonian) god NIN-IB"; Bur-Ṣelem, "the well of Ṣelem"; Ṣidon (from the god Ṣid); Uru-salim (Jerusalem), "city of Shalem"; Beer-Sheba, "the well of the Seven"; Beth-'Anath, "house of 'Anath"; 'En-Shemesh, "spring of the sun"; Migdal-Gad, "tower of the god of fortune"; "Beth-Leḥem, "house of Laḥmu"; Beth-Dagon, "house of Dagon"; Ba'al-perazim, "ba'al of the clefts"; Ba'al-hamon, "ba'al of the torrent"; 'Emeḳ ha-elah, "valley of the sacred tree"; Nebo, named after the Babylonian god Nabu; Ir-naḥash, "city of the serpent"; 'Emeḳ-rephaim, "valley of the ghosts"; Gilgal, "the stone circle"; Gibe'ath ha-elohim, "hill of the gods"; Ba'al-tamar, "ba'al of the palm-tree"; 'Anathoth, "the 'Anaths"; Ba'al-hazor, "ba'al of the enclosure"; Beth-el, "house of the god"; Timnath-ḥeres, "precinct of the sun";

Ba'al-shalisha; Beth-Shemesh, "house of the sun"; Gibe'ath ham-more, "hill of the oracle"; Migdal-el, "tower of the god"; Ne'iel, "trembling (?) of the god"; Timnah, "sacred precinct"; Ba'al-Gad, Dan, "the judge"; 'Ashtaroth, "the Astartes," probably to be read as a singular 'Ashtart; Be'eshtarah, or Beth-'Ashtart; Ẓaphon, "the north"; Penu-el, "face of the god"; Ba'al-Pe'or; Beth-ba'al-Me'on; Bamoth-ba'al, "high places of the ba'al"; Naḥali-el, "brook of the god." Many of these names, such as Ḳadesh, Beth-'Ashtart, Beth-'Anath, Beth-Dagon, Beth-Shemesh occur several times as place-names in different parts of the land.

The conquest of Canaan by Israel was a process that extended over several centuries. The aborigines were not exterminated, but certain Hebrew clans forced their way into the land, and occupied the rural districts, while the walled cities remained

for the most part in the hands of the Canaanites.[1] For a long while there was hostility between the two races; but gradually this ceased, and a process of amalgamation began. Cities that could not be conquered were eventually united to Israel by treaties that gave them full political rights. Whole tribes that made peace and accepted the worship of Yahweh were incorporated into the nation and counted as "sons of Israel." In process of time, through conquest, treaty, or intermarriage, Canaanites and Hebrews were fused into one people and dwelt in the same cities, as was the case, for instance, in Shechem in the days of Abimelech.[2] The Israel of David's day was not the lineal descendant of the nation that entered Canaan under Moses and Joshua, but was a hybrid race composed partly of Israelites and partly of Canaanites.

[1] Josh. xiii. 13; . xvii. 12 f.; Judg. i. 19–21, 27–36.
[2] Judges, chap. ix.

This mixing of races could not occur without appropriation by the Hebrews of the civilization of their predecessors. Just as Rome learned from Greece, and as the northern barbarians learned from Rome, so the uncivilized Israelites learned from the highly cultured Canaanites. From them they received the forms of city-life and the institutions of city-government. From them they learned agriculture and all the other industries of settled society. With this came inevitably the adoption of the local gods of Canaan. Agriculture could not be carried on without observing the ceremonies that accompanied the planting of the grain and the reaping of the harvest. Altars, shrines, sacred trees, and holy stones in all parts of the land were appropriated, and with them the divinities and the sacred traditions that belonged to them. As the Book of Judges and the early prophets repeatedly inform us, "Israel served the

Be'alim and the 'Ashtaroth," that is, alongside of Yahweh, the national god, it also worshiped the local numina of the land that it had conquered. Through this process it lost in large measure the political unity that had been achieved by Moses, and split up into a number of small independent communities, like those of the Canaanites.

In consequence of this decline, about 1050 B. C., it was conquered by the Philistines. The ark was taken captive, and its sanctuary at Shiloh was destroyed.[1] Hebrew nationality and Hebrew religion were now in danger of extinction, and would doubtless have perished, but for the liberation of new spiritual forces through the appearance of Samuel and the sons of the prophets and the founding of the monarchy.

[1] I Sam. iv.; Jer. xxvi. 6.

V

THE PERIOD OF THE EARLY MONARCHY

FOR the religion of the period between Saul, the first Hebrew king (1020 B. C.), and Amos, the first of the writing prophets (760 B. C.), we have copious contemporary sources. Alphabetic writing was first introduced into Palestine about 1000 B. C., and in the course of the succeeding century knowledge of this art spread rapidly among the Hebrews. In the time of David we find the first mention of scribes and recorders at the king's court, and after the death of Solomon the first books appear. Collections of poems, such as the "Book of Jasher" and "Book of the Wars of Yahweh," were soon followed by the Judæan documents that have been used in the compilation of Kings, Samuel, Judges, and the Hexateuch

(Pentateuch and Joshua). After 806 B. C., when Damascus was crippled by the Assyrian king Adad-nirari III, and there was rest from the devastating Syrian wars, literature began to flourish in the northern kingdom. The Ephraimitic history of Ahab and his descendants, the biographies of Elijah and Elisha, the annals of the kings, and the tales of the prophets,— all incorporated into the later Book of Kings,—the Ephraimitic documents in Samuel, Judges, and the Hexateuch, including the E recension of the Book of the Covenant in Ex. xx.–xxiii., and the Blessing of Moses in Deut. xxxiii, are written records that were produced in the two centuries between the division of the kingdom and the appearance of Amos. From these we are able to reconstruct the religion of this period with more completeness and certainty than has been possible in any previous era.

The man who did most to save Israel

from the consequences of its mingling with the Canaanites was Samuel, the seer of Ramah. He was consecrated by his mother before his birth to the service of Yahweh, and in early childhood received an inaugural vision which assured him that he was called to be a prophet. After the fatal battle of Ebenezer he came forward as a leader who commanded general confidence. He saw clearly that Israel's political decline was due to its defection from Yahweh, and that its only hope of salvation lay in a return to the God of Moses. In the realization of this aim he had the help of the guilds of the "sons of the prophets." These lived in communities under the direction of a "father." Like the modern orders of dervishes in the Orient, they cultivated ecstasy as a means of obtaining revelation.[1] Their clairvoyant powers were used in giving advice to peo-

[1] I Sam. x. 10–12; xix. 18–24; Num. xi. 24–29; xxiv. 16; II Kings iii. 15; ix. 11.

ple who inquired of them. Thus Samuel told Saul where his father's lost asses were,[1] Gad advised David in regard to his military operations,[2] Ahijah of Shiloh informed the wife of Jeroboam about her sick child,[3] Elisha threw light on all sorts of problems of politics and of daily life. On this side of his activity the prophet was known as *rô'eh*, or "seer." It described him as one who sought to look into the divine purposes to gratify human curiosity. In this respect he was akin to the seer of primitive Semitic religion.

There was, however, another side to his ministry. He was one who realized profoundly the moral nature of Yahweh and the demand for righteousness that he made upon Israel. On this side of his activity he was known as *nābî'*, "proclaimer," a term

[1] I Sam. x. 2.
[2] I Sam. xxii. 5; II Sam. ii. 1; v. 17–19, 22–25.
[3] I Kings xiv. 3.

which described him as an inspired person through whom God came to men to redeem them. In I Sam. ix. 9 we read, "He that is now called a prophet (*nābî'*) was beforetime called a seer (*rô'eh*)." This shows that at one time the function of the Hebrew prophet was purely oracular. In later days the name *rô'eh* went out of use, and *nābî'* alone remained, because the prophets had ceased to be clairvoyants, and had become preachers of righteousness. In the period of the early monarchy the two functions were united.

In order to impress the people and to recall them to their allegiance to Yahweh, the sons of the prophets went about the land in companies with music and song, appealing to the emotions of the common people much after the manner of a modern revivalist. Saul owed his enthusiasm for Yahweh to the fact that he "got religion" at one of these prophetic meetings, and

many others must have been roused in the same way to heroic self-sacrifice for God and fatherland.

Alongside of the seer stood the soothsayer also as a champion of Yahweh. The *kôhēn* or "priest" of this period was the lineal descendant of the *kâhin* or "diviner" of primitive Semitism. Wherever we meet him in the Books of Judges or Samuel his duty is not sacrificial but oracular. By means of the ephod;[1] or by the sacred lot of Urim and Thummim[2] he obtained *tôrôth*, or oracular responses, in reply to inquiries of the nation or of individuals. Many of the priests were Levites, and the peculiar enthusiasm of this tribe for Yahweh is attested by a number of early passages;[3] but men of other tribes were also priests.

[1] Judg. xvii. 5; I Sam. xiv. 18–20, in the Greek; xxi. 9; xxii. 10; xxiii. 6, 9; xxx. 7 f.

[2] I Sam. xiv. 36–42; xxviii. 6; Deut. xxxiii. 8.

[3] Cf. Ex. xxxii. 25–29; Gen. xxxiv. 25–30; Deut. xxxiii. 8–10.

The sages, who also were a survival from primitive Semitic religion, formed still a third class of champions for Yahweh. Specimens of their proverbs and parables have been preserved in Judg. ix. 7–20; xiv. 14, 18; xv. 16. The early kings also were regarded as endowed by Yahweh with supernatural skill for the guidance of the nation. Solomon in particular was so famous for his wisdom that by later generations he was regarded as the father of the entire gnomic literature.[1] Jonadab, Amon's friend, was "a very wise man."[2] A wise woman of Tekoah had so great a reputation that Joab sought her aid to effect a reconciliation between David and Absalom.[3] A wise woman of Abel persuaded Joab to make peace with the city of Abel, and the men of the city to cut off the head of Sheba.[4] "The counsel of Ahithophel which he counselled in those

[1] Cf. I Kings iii. 4–28; iv. 29–34.
[2] II Sam. xiii. 3.
[3] II Sam. xiv. 2 ff.
[4] II Sam. xx. 16–22.

days was as if a man inquired at the oracle of God." [1]

All these leaders of Hebrew thought perceived that the only way to save Israel from the Philistines was to forsake the gods of Canaan and to return to Yahweh, and in this recognition once more we perceive a revelation of the true God. Some extremists, such as the Kenites and the Nazarites, wished also to reject agriculture, life in towns, and the other elements of Canaanite civilization that were associated with the ba'als; but the wisest men saw that it was impossible to return to the life of the desert. If the ba'als were to be conquered, it could only be by appropriating to the service of Yahweh all that had hitherto belonged to them. Through the efforts of these leaders Yahweh finally triumphed, not by ignoring the ba'als, or by destroying them, but by absorbing them. Here, as in other periods

[1] II Sam. xvi. 23.

of its history, it was an evidence of the divine vitality of the religion of Israel that it was able to take the best from the systems of thought with which it came into contact without losing its own identity.

All the titles that had originally belonged to the gods of Canaan were now applied to Yahweh. The general appellative El, "god," became his personal name. The plural Elohim was construed as a singular, and applied also to him. The compound name Yahweh-Elohim was formed to express the idea that the various elohim were aspects of him. Ṣĕbāôth, "hosts," seems to have been an ancient designation of the multitude of deities. It also was treated as a singular, and was used to form the compound name Yahweh-Ṣĕbāôth. The name Ba'al also became a synonym of Yahweh, and the numerous ba'als were regarded as his local manifestations.

This process of syncretism has left an

interesting monument in personal names of the period of the early monarchy, namely, Jerub-ba'al, Ish-ba'al, Meri-ba'al, Ba'al-yada', Ba'al-ḥanan. No names of this type are found after the time of David. In most of these it is certain that ba'al is not a foreign god, but a title of Yahweh. In one case, Ba'al-Yah, "the ba'al is Yahweh," the identity of the ba'al with Yahweh is asserted. In popular conception in the time of Hosea the ba'als were not foreign gods, but local Yahwehs. Hos. ii. 16 says that Israel has called Yahweh ba'al, and ii. 11, 13 identify the feasts of Yahweh with the "days of the ba'als." Observe also how in II Sam. v. 20 David interprets the name Ba'al-peraṣim as meaning "Yahweh hath broken mine enemies like the breach of waters."

In like manner all the names of kinship and of authority that were used by the Canaanites as titles of their gods [1] were applied

[1] See p. 6.

by the Hebrews of this period to Yahweh. Thus Ab, "father," appears in the personal names Abi-el, Abi-jah, and Abi-nadab; 'Amm, "uncle," in 'Ammi-el, Eli-'am, and Ithre-'am; Dôd, "uncle," in Dôd-Yahu; Aḥ, "brother," in Aḥi-jah, and Aḥi-ṭub; Melek (Molech), "king," in Aḥi-melek, Malki-shua', and Malki-jah; Adon (Adonis), "lord," in Adoni-jah, and Adoni-ram; Dan, "judge," in Dani-el; and Shem, "name," in Shemu-el (Samuel). In all these cases it is certain that these titles do not designate primitive Semitic, or Canaanite departmental gods, but have become epithets of Yahweh.

Individual Canaanite gods also were identified with him. Shalom, or Shalem, "peace," a well-known Canaanite divinity, was compounded with Yahweh in the name Yahweh-Shalom.[1] Yahweh-Yireh[2] and Yahweh-Nissi[3] are probably similar compounds.

[1] Judg. vi. 24. [2] Gen. xxii. 14. [3] Ex. xvii. 15.

Such syncretistic formations are common among the Semites, e.g., 'Ashtar-Chemosh, 'Attar-'Ate (Attargatis), Hadad-Rimmon.

Other gods that could not readily be absorbed by Yahweh were subordinated to him as inferior beings that waited upon him. This was true particularly of celestial and atmospheric phenomena that seemed to possess more individuality than the local ba'als. The term "host of heaven" still lingered in Hebrew usage, and its members were regarded as "sons of God," i. e., beings of a divine nature, but inferior to Yahweh.[1] The sun, moon, and stars were still living creatures, but they obeyed the God of Israel. The Cherub, or storm-cloud, became the animated chariot upon which he rode. The Seraphim, or fiery serpents, i. e., the lightnings, became his attendants.

Other ancient divinities became his "angels," or "messengers." Thus in Gen.

[1] Gen. vi. 2, 4 (J).

xvi. 13 (J) El-roi, the ba'al of the spring at Beer-laḥai-roi, appears to Hagar as the angel of Yahweh; and in Gen. xxxi. 11, 13 (E) the el of the standing stone at Beth-el becomes the angel of God. The plague-god of the other Semites becomes Yahweh's destroying angel.[1] In a number of early passages the angel is discriminated from Yahweh,[2] and this was doubtless the original conception. In other passages the angel and Yahweh are identified.[3] This was the view that ultimately triumphed. The prophets from Amos to Jeremiah have no use for the mediation of angels, but represent everything as caused by the direct activity of Yahweh.

The term "spirit" was also employed to describe ancient gods that were degraded to the position of servants of Yah-

[1] Ex. xii. 23; II Sam. xxiv. 16; II Kings xix. 35.

[2] E. g., Gen. xvi. 11 (J); xxi. 17 (E); xxiv. 7, 40 (J); Ex. xxiii. 20 (E); Num. xx. 16 (E); Judg. vi. 12.

[3] E. g., Gen. xvi. 13; xxi. 19; xlviii. 16; Ex. iii. 4.

weh. Thus we meet the expressions "spirit of wisdom, spirit of might, spirit of jealousy, spirit of error, spirit of deep sleep," for supernatural agencies that Yahweh uses in dealing with men. The insanity of Saul was due to "an evil spirit from Yahweh that terrified him," [1] and such insanity protected a man from injury, because, as in the modern Orient, he was regarded as inspired.[2] To stir up trouble between Abimelech and the Shechemites, God sent an evil spirit into them; [3] and in order that Sennacherib might depart, Yahweh sent a spirit into him.[4] In the more developed Hebrew theology these functions of lesser spirits were absorbed by Yahweh.

Thus by degrees, Yahweh triumphed over the ba'als of Canaan. He ceased to be the god of Sinai, and became the god of the land in which his people dwelt.

[1] I Sam. xvi. 14.
[2] I Sam. xxi. 12–15; xxiv. 7.
[3] Judg. ix. 23.
[4] II Kings xix. 7.

Foreign lands, however, continued to stand outside of his sphere of influence, and in them the ancient divinities still held sway. These "strange gods" were regarded as real and powerful beings.[1] In Judg. xi. 24 Jephthah says to the king of Ammon, "Wilt thou not possess that which Chemosh, thy god, giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever Yahweh, our god, hath dispossessed from before us, them will we possess." In I Sam. xxvi. 19 David laments that by being driven out of the land of Israel he is precluded from the worship of the national god: "They have driven me out this day, that I should have no share in the inheritance of Yahweh, saying, Go, serve other gods." In II Kings iii. 27 Chemosh the god of Moab is placated by a sacrifice, and compels Israel to return to its own land. In similar fashion Sheol, the abode of the

[1] Ex. xv. 11; I Kings xi. 33; II Kings i. 2 f.; iii. 27; Deut. iv. 19; xxix. 26.

dead, was regarded as lying outside of Yahweh's authority. In the narrative of J [1] it is not mentioned along with "earth and heaven" as created by him, and nowhere in the Old Testament is its creation referred to. It also was a foreign land presided over by its own gods, the spirits of the dead. The primitive belief in the superhuman powers of these spirits was left undisturbed by early Yahwism.

When Yahweh had absorbed the nature gods and departmental gods of Canaan, it was natural that he should assume their functions. He made earth and sky, he planted the garden of Eden, and caused a fountain to spring up out of the earth to water it. He moulded man and beast out of dust, and made them live by breathing his breath into them.[2] The sun, moon and stars obeyed his command. He appeared in storm, lightning, fire, and earthquake,

[1] Gen. ii. 4*b* ff.

[2] Gen. ii. 4 ff. (J.)

when he went forth to punish or to rescue his people.[1] The thunder was his voice, the lightnings were his arrows, the rainbow was his bow. He marched before Israel in the desert and in the conquest of Canaan in a cloud of smoke by day and of fire by night, and in a similar cloud he took possession of Solomon's temple. He sent rain and dew, or shut up the windows of heaven if he were displeased. He caused the wild plants of the earth to grow[2] and gave the fruits of the field and the increase of the flocks.[3]

Along with these higher manifestations of his power there were many survivals of primitive fetishism. The holy trees, springs, and stones of Canaan were regarded as his dwelling-places. That he was believed actually to inhabit these objects is shown by the facts that the one set up by Jacob

[1] Judg. v. 4 f.; I Sam. xii. 17; I Kings xix. 11 f.; Psa. xviii.
[2] Num. xxiv. 6. [3] Hos. ii. 5, 8 f.

was called Beth-el, "dwelling of God,"[1] or El-beth-el, "God of the dwelling of God;"[2] and the one at Shechem (read "pillar" instead of "altar") was called El-elohe-Israel, "God, the God of Israel."[3] In Josh. xxiv. 27 it is said of this stone, "It hath heard all the words of Yahweh which he spake unto us." The Asherim, or sacred poles, were also appropriated by Yahweh. Both in Samaria and in Jerusalem they stood in his temples.[4] Closely connected with them was the sacred rod or staff through which the men of God worked miracles or gave oracles.[5]

The ark still held its own as a dwelling-place of Yahweh. When this went into battle, Yahweh went with it.[6] When it was captured by the Philistines it brought dis-

[1] Gen. xxviii. 22.
[2] Gen. xxxv. 7.
[3] Gen. xxxiii. 20.
[4] II Kings xiii. 6; xviii. 4; xxi. 7; xxiii. 6, 15.
[5] Ex. iv. 2, 17, 20; xiv. 16; xvii. 9; Num. xx. 8 f.; II Kings iv. 29, 31; Hos. iv. 12.
[6] I Sam. iv. 6 f.

aster upon them.[1] It led the cows that transported it back to Israel.[2] The men of Beth-shemesh that looked into it were smitten,[3] and so also was Uzzah who touched it.[4] It was the chief cult-object in Solomon's temple.[5] Images also were in use, and were regarded as animated by Yahweh. One of these, the ephod, was a wooden figure covered with plates of metal. Gideon made one of gold and "set it up" in Ophra.[6] Micah the Ephraimite made one of silver,[7] and before this Jonathan, the grandson of Moses, and his descendants ministered.[8] An ephod stood in the temple at Nob,[9] where also there was a priesthood that claimed descent from Moses (or Aaron?). The priests were known as "carriers of the ephod." At Bethel and Dan the images of Yahweh were golden bullocks.[10] It is certain

[1] I Sam. v. 2–6.
[2] I Sam. vi. 12.
[3] I Sam. vi. 19.
[4] II Sam. vi. 7.
[5] I Kings viii. 6.
[6] Judg. viii. 27.
[7] Judg. xvii. 4 f.
[8] Judg. xviii. 30.
[9] I Sam. xxi. 9.
[10] I Kings xii. 28.

that these were not regarded as representations of foreign gods, but of Yahweh himself. Of the bullock that King Jeroboam I set up at Bethel he said, "Behold thy God, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."[1] The later prophetic polemic against images of Yahweh shows how common they were in the pre-prophetic religion of Israel.

The functions of the old Semitic departmental deities were also assumed by Yahweh. He was the author of life and the sender of death. He bestowed health or inflicted disease. He was the giver of children. He was the war-god who led his people in battle against their enemies. Blessings of all sorts, such as long life, peace, prosperity, and numerous descendants, came from his hand; and he was the cause of calamities, such as drought, famine, pestilence, attacks of wild beasts, defeat by

[1] I Kings, xii. 28.

enemies, and strife within the nation. No difficulty was felt in ascribing evil to his immediate agency. All the events of life that the pre-Mosaic Hebrews and the Canaanites ascribed to the activity of particular divinities whether good or bad the Hebrews of this period ascribed to Yahweh.

"The spirit of Yahweh" also absorbed the functions of lesser spirits that possessed men and induced abnormal mental states. Extraordinary strength, skill, wisdom, and heroism were explained as due to the fact that his spirit fell upon a man.[1] He also sent dreams for the guidance of his servants, and caused them to see visions, or to hear his voice.

As to the nature of Yahweh, the primitive Semitic conception of "holiness"[2] was still fundamental. This was not yet construed in an ethical sense, but described him merely

[1] Ex. xxviii. 3; xxxi. 3; Num. xxvii. 18; Judg. vi. 34; xi. 29; xiii. 25; xiv. 6.

[2] See p. 14.

as separated from men by his superhuman existence and power. He was regarded as *rûaḥ*, "wind, spirit," i. e., as consisting of an ethereal substance, different from flesh, but not immaterial. He had human form; and his eyes, nostrils, mouth, arm, hand, finger, heart, and feet are often mentioned. Under certain conditions he could become visible, men could hear his voice, or feel his hand laid upon them. His activity was uniformly described in an anthropomorphic fashion.

He dwelt in the sky, from which he "came down" to visit men, and sent lightning or rain upon the earth.[1] He dwelt also at Sinai, from which he came in the storm-cloud to rescue his people.[2] He was manifest at the numerous sanctuaries of Canaan, and here one "appeared before his face." He was not present in all these places at

[1] Gen. xi. 5; xix. 24; I Kings xxii. 19; II Kings vii. 2.
[2] See p. 38.

once, but he was able to move from one to the other with great rapidity. Outside of Canaan he was not to be found, except on extraordinary occasions when he invaded foreign lands on behalf of his people.[1] In II Sam. xv. 8, Absalom vows a vow in Geshur, "If Yahweh shall indeed bring me again to Jerusalem, then will I worship Yahweh." In II Kings v. 17, Naaman the Syrian asks that he may carry back two mule-loads of the soil of Canaan in order that upon it he may worship Yahweh at Damascus, and Elisha approves of the plan.

In relation to time, Yahweh was regarded as the "living God" — hence the oath, "As Yahweh liveth" — but he was not conceived as eternal in any abstract theological sense. His knowledge was vast. He could reveal hidden things and disclose the future. The thoughts of men's hearts were open to him,[2] but he was not omniscient.

[1] See p. 76.

[2] Gen. xviii. 12 f.

He had to go down to see what the builders of Babel were doing,[1] and to find out about the sin of Sodom.[2] His power was so great that it was said of him, "Is anything too hard for Yahweh,"[3] or "There is no restraint to Yahweh to save by many or by few";[4] but he was not omnipotent, for his authority did not yet extend over the universe, and he was not the only god. Nevertheless he was believed to be more powerful than other gods. He cast down the image of Dagon, and brought back his ark in triumph.[5]

The mental life of Yahweh was conceived as analogous to that of men. He thought, remembered, was grieved, repented, was angry, loved, hated, and pitied. The original Mosaic conception of his character as one who had compassion upon the distressed was still regarded as funda-

[1] Gen. xi. 5.
[2] Gen. xviii. 21.
[3] Gen. xviii. 14.
[4] I Sam. xiv. 6.
[5] I Sam. v.–vi.

mental. Toward Israel his attitude was habitually that of love and fidelity. He showed mercy and truth unto his servant.[1] His compassion was great.[2] At the same time there were inconsistent elements of heathenism combined with this loftier conception. His anger could break forth at the most unexpected times, and one was never quite sure whether or no one would find him in a favorable mood.[3] Towards Israel's enemies he was uniformly hostile. He was the maintainer of righteousness, justice, and truth among men,[4] but he was not bound by the rules that he prescribed. Like Muhammad's Allah, he was supreme will rather than supreme goodness. Whether he "heard" one's prayer or "hid his face" and "covered his eyes" was a matter of his own arbitrary choice. Some men were his favorites, upon whom he showered

[1] Gen. xxiv. 27; xxxii. 10; II Sam. ii. 6.
[2] II Sam. xxiv. 14.
[3] II Sam. vi. 7 ff.; xxiv. 1.
[4] See p. 98 ff.

blessings. Others he "befooled" so that their plans came to naught, or "hardened their hearts" so that heavier judgments came upon them. He punished the innocent for the guilty,[1] and made Pharaoh and Abimelech bear the consequences of Abraham's lie.[2]

Yahweh's fundamental requirement in this period, as in the time of Moses,[3] was exclusive worship of himself. As independent gods the ba'als could not receive homage. Only when they were absorbed by him, and were regarded as local manifestations of himself, did they become inoffensive. Toward foreign divinities the religious leaders of Israel always manifested extreme hostility. Both E and J amplify the primitive Book of the Covenant to emphasize monolatry.[4] Elijah devoted his life to the struggle against the introduction of the worship of

[1] II Sam. xxi. 9; xxiv. 17.
[2] Gen. xii. 17; xx. 3 ff.
[3] See p. 50.
[4] Ex. xxiii. and xxxiv.

the Tyrian Ba'al, and denounced Ahaziah for sending to inquire of Ba'al-Zebul (Zebub ?) the god of Ekron.[1] According to E, Jacob buried the "strange gods" that he had brought from Mesopotamia under the oak at Shechem.[2] The worship of spirits of the dead fell under the same ban. Yahweh was "a jealous God," who would not tolerate the cult of ancestors, heroes, or ghosts, any more than that of other deities of the Semitic world. Saul made an effort to exterminate those who had familiar spirits and the necromancers; and was so successful that, when toward the close of his reign, he wished to consult a medium, he had difficulty in finding one.[3] The commandment of the Book of the Covenant, "Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live," is also directed against necromantic arts.[4] The protestation of the bringer of the tithe in Deut.

[1] I Kings xviii. 21 ff.; II Kings i. 16.
[2] Gen. xxxv. 4.
[3] I Sam. xxviii. 9.
[4] Ex. xxii. 18.

xxvi. 14, "I have not given thereof for the dead," is probably a fragment of a liturgy that is far older than Deuteronomy. Everything that belonged to another god rendered one "unclean," and debarred him from the cult of Yahweh. Thus animals that had originally been "holy" as tribal totems now became "unclean" and must not be eaten.

The sanctuaries of Yahweh were uniformly the holy places of the land of Canaan that had been appropriated by the Hebrews as a result of the conquest. Wherever Yahweh had supplanted a ba'al, and inhabited a sacred tree, spring, stone, or grave, there a "high place" was established where an altar was set up and sacrifice was offered. More than a hundred of these sanctuaries are mentioned in the older writings of the Old Testament. In the case of most of them it can be shown that they were primitive shrines of the land of Canaan.[1] Some of

[1] See p. 56.

them were temples, but the majority were simple inclosures surrounding the sacred object and altar. The altar was either the holy stone itself or was built of earth or unhewn stones.[1] Of a centralization of worship at a single sanctuary, such as Deuteronomy and the Priestly Code prescribe, no trace is found in this period. "In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come unto thee and bless thee," says the Book of the Covenant.[2]

At a few of the more prominent sanctuaries, such as Shiloh, Nob, Jerusalem, Bethel, Dan, priests were found. Some of these were Levites, but membership in that tribe was not yet considered necessary.[3] The functions of the priests were *oracular*, not sacrificial.[4] Hence they were not needed at most of the high places. Any Israelite

[1] I Sam. xiv. 33–35; Ex. xx. 24 f. [2] Ex. xx. 24.
[3] Judg. xvii. 5; I Sam. vii. 1; II Sam. viii. 18; xx. 26; I Kings iv. 5; xii. 31.
[4] See p. 11.

might sacrifice at a neighboring altar, when he wished to slay an animal for food.[1]

As a result of the absorption of Canaanite rites there also existed at certain sanctuaries the so-called *Ḳĕdēshîm* and *Ḳedēshôth*, or "holy ones," that is, men and women who were devoted to prostitution in the service of the deity. Gen. xxxviii. 15 ff. shows that they were common in Judah at the time when the J document was written, and I Kings xiv. 24 mentions them in the time of Rehoboam. From the prohibitions of Deuteronomy and the Holiness Code it appears that they were present at the sanctuaries of Yahweh. Am. ii. 7 and Hos. iv. 14 show that sexual excess at the temples was regarded as an act of worship.

The cult that went on at these sanctuaries

[1] Ex. xx. 24; xxiv. 5; Judg. vi. 19 f.; xiii. 19; I Sam. vii. 17; x. 8; xiii. 9; xiv. 34; II Sam. vi. 17; I Kings xii. 33; xviii. 30–38.

was the same that had always been maintained at them, only now it was rendered to Yahweh. When he absorbed the local gods of Canaan, he appropriated to himself all the rites that had formerly belonged to them. The few accounts that are given of early Hebrew ritual[1] show that the forms of worship were practically the same as those that have already been described for primitive Semitic religion.[2] The sacrifice bore the ancient name *zebaḥ*, "slaughter." Every sacrifice was at the same time a killing for food, and every killing for food was a sacrifice; hence only beasts or birds that were eaten might be sacrificed.[3] The animal was brought to the nearest high place, and there its blood was shed upon the holy stone or altar. Blood must not be eaten, but must be poured out as a libation to Yahweh;[4] hence the

[1] E. g. Num. xxiii. 1–4; Judg. vi. 18–21; xiii. 15–19; I. Sam. ii. 13–17; xiv. 32–35; II Sam. vi. 13; I Kings xviii. 30–38.

[2] See p. 16 f.

[3] Ex. xx. 24; Gen. viii. 20.

[4] I Sam. xiv. 32–35.

prohibition of eating animals that had died accidentally,[1] because their blood had not been offered. Part of the *zebaḥ* was burned on the altar as "the food of God," the rest was eaten by the worshipers. If there were several victims, some might be wholly burnt as an *'ôlā*, "burnt offering," and others wholly eaten as a *shelem*, "peace offering."[2] *'Ôlā* and *shelem* were thus the two halves of a large *zebaḥ*. Of the "sin offering" and the "guilt offering" there is no trace in the early literature. The firstborn of all domestic animals were sacrificed on the eighth day after birth.[3]

Firstborn children were also sacrificed to Yahweh in the early period of the occupation of Canaan. This was a common custom of the Canaanites, and archæology shows that it did not disappear from the Hebrews until after the Exile. Nevertheless, in prophetic circles opposition to it arose at an

[1] Ex. xxii. 31. [2] Ex. xx. 24. [3] Ex. xxii. 30; xxxiv. 19.

early date. In the J recension of the Covenant Code [1] the original Mosaic law is enlarged with a provision for the redemption of children (absent from the E recension, Ex. xxii. 29). The story of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac, and Yahweh's hindering of him, shows that sacrifice of the firstborn son was a rite once required by Yahweh, but now regarded by the writer as no longer demanded. In spite of prophetic opposition, however, these sacrifices continued to be offered.[2] Melek (Molech), "King," was one of the titles of Yahweh, and the child-sacrifices offered to "the King" were understood by the people as offered to Yahweh.[3] Sacrifice of adults in times of special need was also not unknown. Jephthah offered his daughter in fulfilment of a vow,[4] and Hiel

[1] Ex. xxxiv. 20; cf. xiii. 13.

[2] II Kings xvi. 3; II Chr. xxviii. 3; Mic. vi. 7; Jer. vii. 31; xix. 5; xxxii. 35; Ezek. xx. 24–26, 31.

[3] Lev. xviii. 21; xx. 2–5; II Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. xxxii. 35.

[4] Judg. xi. 31, 39.

the Bethelite devoted his oldest son, when he laid the foundations of Jericho; and his youngest son, when he set up the gates.[1]

Other sorts of sacrifice were first-fruits,[2] libations,[3] anointing of the sacred stone with oil,[4] and the presentation of cakes of unleavened bread.[5] These agricultural offerings were borrowed from the cult of the ba'als of Canaan, hence they were felt to be less acceptable to Yahweh than the bloody sacrifices of the earlier Hebrew religion.[6]

The primitive Semitic institution of the Sabbath [7] was retained in this period. In the earliest codes only agricultural labor is prohibited on this day.[8] In the early histories we meet the same conception.[9] In this period the Sabbath was not primarily

[1] I Kings xvi. 34.
[2] Ex. xxiii. 19; Gen. iv. 3.
[3] Gen. xxxv. 14.
[4] Gen. xxviii. 18; xxxv. 14.
[5] Ex. xxiii. 18; Judg. vi. 20; xiii. 16, 19; I Sam. xxi. 6.
[6] Gen. iv. 5 f.
[7] p. 18.
[8] Ex. xxiii. 12; xxxiv. 21; cf. the analogy of the sabbatical year, Ex. xxiii. 10 f.
[9] Josh. vi. 4; II Kings iv. 23; xi. 5 ff.

a day of rest, but a day of propitiation and sacrifice.[1] Hence it was included by the later prophets in their general condemnation of ritual religion.[2] The Sabbath was originally a lunar holy day, and was commonly associated with the day of new moon in the phrase "new moons and Sabbaths." On the new moon the Hebrew clans met for sacrificial feasts.[3]

The primitive Semitic rite of the Passover is known to J,[4] but is regarded as a domestic, rather than a national institution, and is not yet combined with the feast of unleavened bread. By E Passover is not mentioned in the list of holy days,[5] nor elsewhere in that document. Apparently the observance of this feast had died out in the northern kingdom where E was written.

The three pilgrimage feasts of the Mo-

[1] II Kings xi. 5, 7, 9; xvi. 18.
[2] Hos. ii. 11–13; Isa. i. 13.
[3] I Sam. xx. 5, 18, 24 ff.
[4] Ex. xii. 21–27; xxxiv. 25.
[5] Ex. xxiii. 10–19.

saic Covenant Code [1] were transformed in consequence of the occupation of Canaan into agricultural festivals. The "feast of unleavened bread" celebrated the early barley harvest.[2] The "feast of harvest," or "of weeks," was at the time of the ripening of the wheat.[3] The "feast of ingathering" fell in the autumn when all the crops had been gathered.[4] On these occasions male Israelites were expected to journey to one of the greater national sanctuaries.[5]

Other religious acts that were not limited to holy places were circumcision, fasting, prayer, vows, blessing, cursing, and oaths. War was regarded as a sacred duty. Hence the common expression for "declare war" was "sanctify war," and

[1] See p. 49.

[2] Ex. xxiii. 15; xxxiv. 18.

[3] Ex. xxiii. 16*a*; xxxiv. 22*a*.

[4] Ex. xxiii. 16*b*; xxxiv. 22*b*; Judg. xxi. 19; I Kings viii. 2; xii. 32; Hos. ix. 5.

[5] Ex. xxiii. 17; xxxiv. 23; I Sam. i. 3.

the soldiers were known as "the sanctified ones." They were so holy that they could eat of the shewbread,[1] and the camp was so holy that nothing "unclean," i. e., under the influence of minor spirits, could be admitted to it.[2] In order to secure the divine favor it was customary to vow to destroy the men, women, children, and animals that were found in a city, if it were captured.[3]

Morality also was demanded by Yahweh, although it was regarded as less important than ritual. Everything that was customary was right, and was protected by a divine sanction. The result was that many matters that we should regard as ethically indifferent were treated as religious duties, while other matters that seem to us of the highest importance were ignored. Nevertheless, a large number of

[1] I Sam. xxi. 6.
[2] Deut. xx. 1–9; xxiii. 9–14; xxiv. 5.
[3] Josh. vi. 21; I Sam. xv. 3.

distinctly moral obligations were by this process made a part of religion.

Toward members of the family the primitive customs of the desert were still regarded as divine requirements. Reverence for parents and regard for their blessing or their curse still showed survivals of primitive ancestor-worship.[1] Striking or cursing father or mother was punishable with death.[2] Marriage with near relatives was commended. A man might marry his half-sister on the father's side, but not on the mother's side.[3] The wife was the chattel of her husband, like all the rest of his personal property,[4] but he was not allowed to put her away arbitrarily. If she were barren, he could not divorce her, but might take one of her maids as a concubine.[5] Yahweh rewarded Leah for giving her maid cheerfully to Jacob under these cir-

[1] Gen. xxvii. 41; xliv. 30 f.; l. 15 ff.
[2] Ex. xxi. 15, 17.
[3] Gen. xx. 12; II Sam. xiii. 13.
[4] Ex. xx. 17.
[5] Gen. xvi. 3.

cumstances.[1] Children had no rights over against their father. He might sell them into slavery, or offer them in sacrifice as he saw fit; but parental affection secured that ordinarily they were treated kindly. Toward relatives there was the same intense loyalty that is felt by the Bedawy Arab. "Let there be no strife between us, for we are brethren," says Abraham to Lot.[2] It was one's duty to defend a kinsman, even if he were in the wrong. To sell the family estate which contained the graves of the forefathers was a sin against Yahweh.[3] If a man died, his brother must take his wife and "raise up seed unto him"; and neglect of this obligation was severely punished.[4]

The duties which the primitive Semite had recognized only in relation to the clan the religion of Yahweh extended to the

[1] Gen. xxx. 18.
[2] Gen. xiii. 8.
[3] I Kings xxi. 3.
[4] Gen. xxxviii. 7-10.

entire nation. The civil and religious authorities received the title of "father," and enjoyed the same respect as parents.[1] The fellow-Israelite was to be regarded as a "brother," and duty toward him was summed up in the phrase "kindness and fidelity."[2] It was called the "kindness of God," or "of Yahweh," because divinely required. Murder was to be punished with death, and the duty of avenging it devolved upon the nearest kinsman.[3] If man did not inflict the penalty, the blood cried from the earth to Yahweh, and he avenged it.[4] The altar of God sheltered only the accidental manslayer. If the crime were intentional, the murderer was to be taken from the asylum and delivered to the avenger of blood.[5] Injuries to men and women were punished with the infliction of a like injury,

[1] Ex. xxii. 28; I Sam. xxiv. 7 f.; xxii. 17; I Kings xx. 35.
[2] Gen. xxiv. 49; xlvii. 29.
[3] Gen. ix. 6; xxvii. 45.
[4] Gen. iv. 10; xlii. 22.
[5] Ex. xxi. 14.

"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."[1] Stealing a man to enslave him was punishable with death.[2] Adultery, or violation of a betrothed maiden, was an invasion of the property of the husband, and as such was an offense against Yahweh.[3] Seduction of an unbetrothed girl was an invasion of the property of her father, and must be compensated.[4] Prostitution was an accepted institution, that, as we have seen above, was taken under the protection of religion. It brought no disgrace to the women who followed it, or to the men who associated with them.[5] It was regarded as a matter of course that a female slave or captive should become the concubine of her master. Stealing was forbidden.[6] Injuries to property, whether in animals or in agricultural pro-

[1] Ex. xxi. 18–32. [2] Ex. xxi. 16.

[3] Gen. xii. 14–19; xx. 3–8; xxvi. 8–11; xxxix. 7–12; Ex. xx. 14; II Sam. xii. 14.

[4] Gen. xxxiv. 7; Ex. xxii. 16.

[5] Gen. xxxviii. 15 f.; Judg. xvi. 1, 4.

[6] Ex. xxii. 1; xx. 15.

duce, must be compensated.[1] Truthfulness, justice and impartiality in dealing with fellow-Israelites were commanded[2] and violation of an oath was severely punished.[3] Even enemies were to be helped, if they were in trouble.[4]

Toward dependents and inferiors the Hebrew legislation was peculiarly favorable. The conception of Yahweh as a merciful God who had redeemed his people from Egypt led early Israel more than any other ancient nation to believe that kindness to the helpless was well-pleasing in his sight. Those in authority were required to be just to the poor and inaccessible to bribes.[5] It was forbidden to take interest of a debtor, or to retain his outer garment as a pledge.[6] The natural yield of land that lay fallow in the seventh year was to be left for the poor.[7]

[1] Ex. xxi. 33–xxii. 13.
[2] Ex. xxiii. 1–3.
[3] Gen. xxxi. 49; I Sam. xx. 23, 42; II Sam. xxi. 1.
[4] Ex. xxiii. 4 f.
[5] Ex. xxiii. 6–8.
[6] Ex. xxii. 25–27.
[7] Ex. xxiii. 11.

When a Hebrew had been enslaved for debt, he was to be set free in the seventh year[1] and a female slave that had been taken as a concubine might not be sold, but must be treated as a wife or set free.[2] Killing a slave was punishable with death, and maiming must be compensated by giving him his freedom.[3] When there was no son in the family, a slave inherited the estate.[4] Oppression of the widow or the fatherless was peculiarly hateful to Yahweh.[5] Hospitality toward strangers was a duty inherited from the nomadic period.[6] This went so far that Lot felt constrained to give up his two daughters to save his guests from assault.[7] Justice and kindness toward aliens were required.[8] Even kindness to animals was enjoined.[9]

[1] Ex. xxi. 1–6.
[2] Ex. xxi. 7–11.
[3] Ex. xxi. 20 f., 26 f.
[4] Gen. xv. 3.
[5] Ex. xxii. 22.
[6] Gen. xviii. 2 f.; xix. 2 f.; xxiv. 24 ff.; Judg. xix. 20.
[7] Gen. xix. 8; cf. Judg. xix. 24.
[8] Gen. xx. 11; xlii. 18; Ex. xxii. 21; xxiii. 9.
[9] Ex. xx. 10; xxiii. 5, 11 f.

As among the nomadic Bedawin, these rules of conduct applied only to relations with fellow-Israelites. In dealing with foreigners lying, cheating, and violence were not condemned. Abraham's lie to Pharaoh and Abimelech,[1] and Jacob's defrauding of Esau and Laban[2] were not blamed, and Yahweh was represented as helping the offender against the injured party. Yahweh himself commanded the Israelites to spoil the Egyptians at the time of the Exodus.[3] In war the ancient Hebrews were as cruel as all the other Semites;[4] and, as we saw above, extermination of a hostile people was regarded as an act of homage to Yahweh.

Of such virtues as modesty, temperance, and other forms of self-restraint the early Israelite had little conception. Gross excesses, such as bestiality and sodomy, were

[1] Gen. xii. 10 ff.; xx. 2 ff.
[2] Gen. xxvii. 5 ff.; xxxi. 1 ff.
[3] Ex. xii. 35 ff.
[4] Gen. xxxiv. 25 ff.; I Sam. xxvii. 8 f.; II Sam. viii. 2.

indeed condemned ;[1] but in general there was no restraint upon sexual excess on the part of the man, though the woman was carefully guarded. Drunkenness was not a disgrace.[2] The suicide of a wounded warrior was regarded as honorable.[3]

To those who kept Yahweh's commandments he promised that their days should be long upon the land which he gave them,[4] that their bread and their water should be blessed, and sickness should be kept away from them, that none should cast their young or be barren, that all their enemies should be defeated before them, and their border should be widely extended.[5] Those who broke his commandments were threatened with sudden death,[6] with loss of children and property, with sickness, misfor-

[1] Ex. xxii. 19; Gen. xix. 5 f., 13; Judg. xix. 22 f.
[2] Gen. ix. 21 ff.; xliii. 34; I Sam. i. 13; II Sam. xi. 13.
[3] Judg. ix. 54; I Sam. xxxi. 4.
[4] Ex. xx. 12. [5] Ex. xxiii. 25–31.
[6] Gen. xxxviii. 7 f.; I Sam. vi. 19 ff.; xxv. 39; II Sam. vi. 6 ff.

tune, and invasion by enemies.[1] Nowhere in pre-exilic literature is any reward of virtue or punishment of sin anticipated in a future life. As we saw above, Sheol stood outside of the authority of Yahweh, and the dead were themselves gods with whom he had no dealings. The sinner who went down to Sheol was safe from his direct vengeance. The only way in which he could now be reached was through his children. If they were cut off, his spirit would be deprived of the offerings that were necessary for its repose.

In punishing sin Yahweh dealt with men collectively. As an inheritance from primitive Semitic times the early Hebrews had a singularly strong sense of the solidarity of the clan. It was considered natural and proper to put a man's relatives to death for his offense.[2] In like manner Yahweh visited

[1] Gen. xliv. 16; Judg. ix. 56 f.; II Sam. xvi. 8.

[2] I Sam. xxii. 1, 3 f.; xxii. 16; xxv. 22; II Sam. xxi. 6 ff.; II Kings ix. 26.

the penalty of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and the fourth generation of them that hated him.[1]

If a man committed a deliberate offense, he was of course aware of his guilt, but frequently the sin was unconscious, and was known only from its consequences. When misfortune befell either the nation or an individual, this was taken as a sign that one of Yahweh's commandments had been broken, and an effort was made by inquiry through a priest or a prophet to ascertain the cause of his displeasure. Thus the defeat of Israel at Ai was found to be due to the fact that Achan had violated the ban.[2] The failure of Saul to obtain a favorable oracle was because Jonathan had broken the taboo on food.[3] The pestilence that

[1] Ex. xx. 5; cf. Gen. ix. 24; xii. 17; xx. 18; Ex. xii. 29; xvii. 16; Num. xvi. 27 ff.; Josh. vii. 24; I Sam. ii. 31; II Sam. iii. 29; xii. 10, 14 f.; I Kings xi. 11 f.; xiv. 10; xvi. 3; xxi. 21.

[2] Josh. vii. 11 f.

[3] I Sam. xiv. 36 ff.

visited Jerusalem was in consequence of David's having numbered the people.[1] The famine in the reign of David was a punishment for Saul's killing of the Gibeonites.[2]

When the sin was known, the next question was how to placate the wrath of Yahweh. In certain cases confession and entreaty for pardon were sufficient. Thus when David says, "I have sinned against Yahweh," the prophet Nathan replies, "Yahweh also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."[3] The intercession of a priest or a prophet helped to secure such forgiveness.[4] In other cases some sort of a sacrifice was demanded before the divine favor could be regained.[5] This sacrifice was the ordinary burnt offering or peace offering: the special sin offering and guilt offering had not yet been developed. At other times

[1] II Sam. xxiv. 15.
[2] II Sam. xxi. 1.
[3] II Sam. xii. 13.
[4] Gen. xx. 7; Ex. xxxii. 32; I Sam. ii. 25.
[5] I Sam. xxvi. 19; II Sam. xxiv. 18 f.

Yahweh accepted no propitiation, and would not turn away his wrath from the nation until the offender was destroyed.[1] In the case of Jonathan a substitute was provided, when he had incurred the death penalty.[2] Where the offender died unpunished, his children were put to death in his place.[3]

The only eschatology that was known in this period was the belief that Yahweh had destined Israel to a career of conquest and prosperity in the earth.[4] In II Sam. vii. 12–16 the hope of the future is connected with the permanence of the house of David, but there is no suggestion yet of the appearance of an individual Messiah. From Amos v. 18–20 it appears that the doctrine of a "day of Yahweh," i. e., a turning-point in history when Yahweh would give Israel victory over all its enemies, was already

[1] E. g., Ex. xxxii. 27; Num. xxv. 1–4; Josh. vii. 25.
[2] I Sam. xiv. 45.
[3] II Sam. xxi. 1–9.
[4] Gen. xii. 2 f.; xv. 18–21; Num. xxiii.–xxiv.

established in pre-prophetic times, but this conception had no ethical or religious value.

The eschatology of the individual was unaffected by early Yahwism. All the animistic conceptions held by the primitive Semites were incorporated bodily into the Hebrew religion, and remained unchanged down to the times of the prophets. The Babylonian doctrine of Sheol that was current in Canaan was also adopted, and superimposed upon the ancient belief in spirits. The religion of Yahweh had nothing new to teach upon this subject; it simply left the ancient beliefs undisturbed and unassimilated. Death was not regarded as a going to God, but as a passing out of the realm of his love and care. Even the righteous Hezekiah is represented as saying, "I shall go unto the gates of Sheol. . . . I shall not see Yahweh in the land of the living. . . . They that go down into the Pit

cannot hope for thy faithfulness."[1] Worship of necessity ceased when one entered that land: "In death there is no remembrance of thee; in Sheol who shall give thee thanks";[2] Sheol cannot praise thee, Death cannot celebrate thee. . . . The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day."[3] These passages are all late, still they express accurately the feeling of the period under discussion. Existence in Sheol was dark, dreary, and shadowy; and therefore death seemed an unmixed evil. The one desire of the ancient Hebrew was that he might live long in the land, enjoy peace and prosperity, and have numerous descendants. His hope never extended into the other world. The conception of God needed to be deepened and broadened immensely before an adequate idea of immortality could be formed.

[1] Isa. xxxviii. 10 f., 18; cf. Ps. lxxxviii. 4.
[2] Ps. vi. 5. [3] Isa. xxxviii. 18 f.

From the foregoing sketch of the religion of Israel in the period of the early monarchy it appears that its conception of God and his requirements had many noble elements that made it a real preparation for the teaching of the prophets and of Jesus Christ. Yahweh was not the only God, but he was the greatest god, and was the only one that might be worshiped. He was not transcendent, omnipresent, and omnipotent; but he was a spiritual being, supremely exalted above nature and man. He was not perfect in righteousness, but kindness and faithfulness were his main characteristics. His thought and effort were constantly exerted for the good of his people, and he could be depended upon for help in time of need. His chief requirements were sacrifice and holy days; nevertheless, all the fundamental forms of morality were obligations to him. Even in its pre-prophetic stage this religion was vastly superior to

the other religions of antiquity. That of Egypt, of Babylonia, or of any other early Semitic race seems degraded in comparison with it. It was a worthy foundation for the more spiritual and ethical message of the prophets, just as their message was a foundation for the gospel of Jesus; and therefore it must be regarded as an integral part of God's revelation of himself.

Nevertheless, the numerous excellences of this early faith should not blind us to the fact that it contained survivals of primitive Semitic and Canaanite heathenism that could not at once be eliminated. Yahweh triumphed over the ba'als and the other gods by absorbing them. All their attributes, activities, sacred objects, holy places, altars, ritual, feasts, and sacred traditions were appropriated by him; and the result was that evil came into his religion along with good. His victory over his rivals was purchased at the cost of a mixture of his

worship with all sorts of alien elements, just as the victory of Christianity over the Græco-Roman world was purchased at a similar cost. When the battle was won and the rivals had disappeared, it became apparent that Yahwism must be purged of much heathen contamination that it had contracted in its career of conquest. Just as the Protestant Reformation was necessary to cleanse the Church of the heathenism that it had absorbed in fifteen centuries, so the great prophets must appear to reform the religion of Israel. The history of their conflict will be the theme of another volume in this series.

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